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Tri-Community Flooding Group Minutes 01/20/2010

Tri-Community Flooding Group Meeting Minutes

Jan. 12, 2010, 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Clarissa Rowe, Jennifer Wright, Catherine Daly Woodbury, Roger Frymire, Stephen Revilak.

Meeting Schedule for 2010

Our planned schedule for 2010 meetings:

March 9

May 11

July 13 (we may move to the Selectmen's Chamber where there is AC)

September 21 (favored by Ms. Wright, since the state primary is September 14)

November 9

Unless there are announcements to the contrary, meetings will begin at 18:00 pm.

Meeting Minutes/Website maintenance

Stephen Revilak has volunteered to take meeting minutes.

A volunteer to maintain Tri-Community's page on Google groups, <<http://groups.google.com/group/tri-community>>, would be appreciated.

Goals for 2010

FEMA: Revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps

Arlington will approve the new Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) during their regular town meeting in April.

Arlington has already begun an outreach program, to inform residents of the map changes, and to make residents aware of how the map changes will affect them.

Cambridge is awaiting input and guidance from FEMA before they approve the new FIRMs. The City of Cambridge is also planning to notify residents again that will be affected by the map changes. In addition to notifying property owners, Cambridge would also like to notify renters living in flood plains.

The new FIRMs become effective in June 2010; until this point, communities are urged to use the more stringent maps.

It was noted that insurance requirements are not triggered by a municipality's adoption of the flood insurance rate maps. Rather, insurance requirements are triggered by the effective date of the maps.

Funding for Gauges

Roger Frymire noted that funding for the Amelia Earhart Dam gauge is scheduled to be dropped in July. This gauge is one of twelve whose funding will run out. These gauges measure water depth, not water flow.

Gauges cost approximately \$7,500/year to operate. Clarissa Rowe suggested contacting one of the funder at the

EEA (Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs) William Hinkley, to see if there were any avenues for continuing to fund the gauges from the Exxon settlement funds.

Jennifer Wright proposed that we invite someone from the USGS to our March meeting, so that we can discuss deployment of gauges in and around the Mystic River area.

Planning Initiatives for Global Warming

At our last (Nov. 17, 2009) meeting, we began to discuss global warming, and how it might affect flooding in the tri-community area. Tonight, there was general support for this idea; it would be beneficial for municipalities to start thinking about the possibility of more frequent flooding events during the next fifty years.

What kind of contingency planning needs to be done? For example, should we advise home builders not to construct basements in their homes? Should we require impervious pavement for particular applications? Who are the experts that can help with local planning initiatives?

Roger felt that it would be useful to compare the new flood insurance rate maps with the Army Corps of Engineers tidal maps. As global warming brings the possibility of rising sea levels and more frequent hurricane events, the Army Corps of Engineers tidal maps might provide some useful insight.

Other Business

Blair Pond

Jennifer Wright reports that the DCR is planning to file a NOI in late February for the Blair Pond work. Cambridge will hold a public hearing for the NOI, once it's been received from the DCR.

Cambridge Sewer Separation

Catherine Daly Woodbury reports that the Cambridge DPW has put out a bid for sewer separation in the Whittemore Avenue area; Cambridge expects to award the contract shortly. Once this separation work is done, the CAM-400 CSO will close. Cambridge is also planning to install floatable control devices on CAM-2 and CAM-401B, which are CSO outlets near the intersection of Mass. Ave. and Alewife Brook Parkway. These measures should have a significant positive effect on water quality.

This work is scheduled to begin in June 2010, and should take approximately four months to complete. Much of the work will be done at night, to minimize traffic disruption. Cambridge will contact the town of Arlington, re: traffic management in the Mass. Ave./Alewife Brook Parkway area.

Herbicides and Cyanobacteria

Roger Frymire reports that the EPA and USGS have applied for funding to do research around the Mystic River watershed. The research will focus on water quality, in particular, on the amount of cyanobacteria in the water.

There is a suspicion that certain herbicides (e.g., sonor) might have the side effect of promoting cyanobacteria growth. Clarissa Rowe will ask Arlington's Spy Pond group to examine the use of sonor in Spy Pond.

Meeting Adjourned at 18:37.